Reply to "Comment on 'Role of Initial Entanglement and Non-Gaussianity in the Decoherence of Photon-Number Entangled States Evolving in a Noisy Channel' "

Michele Allegra,[1, 2] Paolo Giorda,[1] and Matteo G. A. Paris[3]

[1]ISI Foundation, I-10133 Torino, Italia.
[2]Dipartimento di Fisica Teorica, Università degli Studi di Torino, I-10125 Torino, Italia.
[3]Dipartimento di Fisica, Università degli Studi di Milano, I-20133 Milano, Italia.

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In our Letter [1] we addressed the evolution of photon-number entangled states $|\Psi\rangle = \sum_n \Psi_n |n\rangle |n\rangle$ (PNES), $|n\rangle$ being a n-photon Fock state of a harmonic oscillator, in noisy channels described by the master equation $\dot{\varrho} = A \sum_{j=1}^{2} \mathcal{L}[a_j]\varrho + B \sum_{j=1}^{2} \mathcal{L}[a_j^\dagger]\varrho$, $\mathcal{L}[O]\varrho = 2O\varrho O^\dagger - O^\dagger O\varrho - \varrho O^\dagger O$, $A = \frac{1}{2}\Gamma(1 + N_T)$, $B = \frac{1}{2}\Gamma N_T$, where Γ is the damping factor of the channel and N_T the average number of thermal excitations of the channel. Upon exploiting several non equivalent separability criteria we found evidence that entanglement of Gaussian PNES survives longer, and thus we drew a conjecture about the generality of this result. General arguments supporting the conjecture have been then put forward in [3]. On the other hand, the conjecture needs not to be true if one enlarges the set of separability criteria, e.g. to include the negativity of the density matrix under partial transposition (NDPT). Indeed, in [4] it has been shown that the conjecture is too strong to be maintainable in the general case.

The Comment to our Letter[2] presents two examples where the conjecture is violated. The first is the states $|\psi_{01}\rangle = c_0|00\rangle + c_1|11\rangle$ with $0 \leq c_1^2 \leq 1/2$, whereas the second example concerns photon subtracted squeezed vacuum (PSSV), i.e. the PNES with $\psi_n = \propto (n + 1)x^{n+1}$ with initial entanglement $\epsilon_0 \in \{0.1, 1\}$ and initial energy $E_0 \in \{0.013, 0.3\}$. Not surprisingly, these examples confirm that by enlarging the set of separability criteria the conjecture is not maintainable. However, these examples are worth to be analyzed in order to assess whether their "robustness" compared to Gaussian states has some relevant physical consequences. To this aim we have evaluated the residual NDPT $\mathcal{N}_R[\rho(t_G)]$ displayed by the above states at the Simon' (Gaussian) separation time t_G (i.e. at the time in which Gaussian states with same initial entanglement/energy become separable) for $B/A \equiv N_T/(1 + N_T) \lesssim 0.5$ (remind that one photon at optical frequency $\nu \sim 10^{15}$ Hz corresponds to a temperature $T \sim 5\,10^4$ K).

Results are shown in Fig. 1, where, in order to give an estimate of the level of residual entanglement, we report the ratios $\mathcal{N}_R/\mathcal{N}_G$ and $\mathcal{N}_R/\mathcal{N}_0$, where $\mathcal{N}_G$ is the maximal entanglement at the energy of $\rho(t_G)$, i.e. the entanglement displayed by a pure Gaussian state with same energy, and $\mathcal{N}_0$ is the initial entanglement. For PSSV states (left panels), we have that although their separation time

can be larger than t_G, their residual entanglement is very small for all values of B/A and in particular for realistic values of N_T, i.e. $B/A \ll 1$. Similar results are obtained for $|\psi_{01}\rangle$ (right panels).
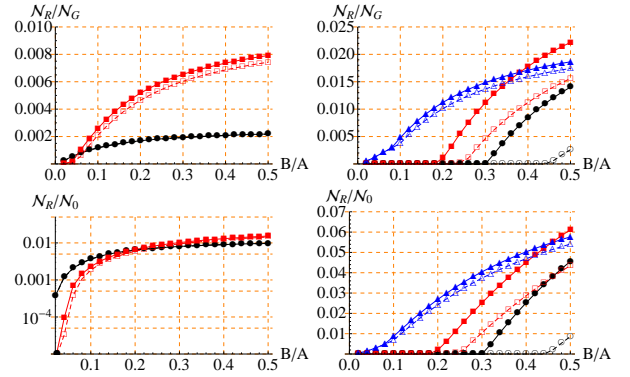

FIG. 1: Renormalized negativity at separability time t_G for Gaussian states with same initial energy (full symbols) or entanglement (open symbols). (Left) PSSV states: black circles, $\epsilon_0 = 0.1$, $E_0 = 0.013$ (notice that the curves overlap); red squares, $\epsilon_0 = 1.0$, $E_0 = 0.3$. (Right) $|\psi_{01}\rangle$ states: black circles, $|c_1|^2 = 0.5$; red squares, $|c_1|^2 = 0.25$; blue triangles, $|c_1|^2 = 0.05$.

In summary, the conjecture that we put forward in our Letter, based on a correct comparison of several different separabililty criteria, is not maintanable in a strict sense if one includes the NDPT criterion. Nevertheless, for the examples of non Gaussian states proposed in the Comment, which violate the conjecture, the residual entanglement is extremely low. Therefore it remains an open question whether these, as well as other kinds of states, could represent a useful resource in quantum communication protocols. The issue of degradation of continuous variables entanglement in noisy channels is indeed a extremely relevant one, and it is worth be to analyzed in detail with a more substantial analysis.

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